

Dear Education Committee member:

Last year the Connecticut General Assembly passed a law that would ensure that those providing Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in public schools or at public expense would have the training and a credential necessary to do so. This year, the State Department of Education has proposed changes to this legislation that would enable anyone one who is certified in any other area, but who do not have any training whatsoever in Applied Behavior Analysis to provide these critical services. As a professional Board Certified Behavior Analyst working young children with Autism in Birth to Three, I am in opposition to SB1105 in that this new proposed legislation would be nothing but detrimental to children with Autism.

Of importance to note is that Psychologists, Speech Therapists, and Special Education teachers are not by professional standards trained to provide ABA services and therefore by law not qualified. By allowing individuals to practice ABA with children who are not qualified would be detrimental to the learning of individuals with autism and potentially cause regression. This would only cost the state and families additional dollars in later treatment and lifelong care costs. Additionally, there is already a deficit of SLP's, special education teachers and psychologists to meet CT's current educational needs. By adding additional responsibilities to these professions, ones that are not necessarily within their scope of practice will not meaningfully increase the number of providers. Lastly, supervision and direction by a designated administrator who also may not have ABA within their scope of practice will add to the cost of providing services while decreasing the ability of qualified personnel to do their jobs.

Having been providing services for children with Autism and other Developmental Disabilities for twenty plus years, I have seen the true benefits of evidence based treatments such as ABA and how it has enhanced many individuals lives. I have also witnessed the damage done when implemented incorrectly by those who were not qualified to do so. Families with children with Autism depend on effective treatments and those who are qualified to deliver them so that they can hold onto the hope that their child will overcome the symptoms and function independently in our society when adults. Let's not take away that hope by allowing just anyone to deliver these critical services.

Respectfully,  
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